

EdD 602 – POLICY AND PRACTICE FOR EDUCATION LEADERS I

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

Fall 2017

Professor: Rob Wassmer, Ph.D.

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Home-Page: <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/w/wassmerr>

Class Location and Times: AIRC 1008
Nov. 17 (Fri.) 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 (Sat.) 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 1 (Fri.) 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Dec 2 (Sat.) 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 15 (Fri.) 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Dec. 16 (Sat) 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

We will begin class at the scheduled start time and remain in class until the scheduled end time. Please plan appropriately.

Office: Room 3037 Tahoe Hall

Office Phone: (916) 278-6304

Office Hours: Mon. 3:30 to 5:30 pm in my office; also at break and lunch time during class, after class, and by appointment.

Required Texts:

(1) *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 2012, Fourth or Fifth Edition, Sage, purchase at Amazon.Com, or another internet bookseller, or bookstore.

(2) *Talking Politics: What You Need to Know before Opening Your Mouth*, Sheila Kennedy, 2012, Georgetown University Press, purchase at Amazon.com, or another internet bookseller, or bookstore.

(3) *Economics of Education*, Michael Lovenheim and Sheila Turner, 2018, Worth Publishers, purchase at Amazon.com (only electronic version), or another internet bookseller, or bookstore.

You should get all texts immediately and begin reading as soon as soon as possible.

There are also supplemental podcasts and readings assigned throughout the semester. These are in the schedule below. Access these readings directly from the hyperlink provided or SacCT.

Structure of Class:

Class will begin at the time posted in the university schedule. That is 5:30 pm on Friday and 8 am on Saturday. It will also end at the posted times of 9:30 pm on Friday and 5:30 pm on Saturday. I do this to provide you the classroom time that you paid for. To make these extended learning times bearable, we will need to take scheduled breaks. I want to make this routine so we all know when it is time for a break. Thus, I establish the following schedule. Of course, you are free to get a drink or use the bathroom at any time. We can also talk on a given day about eliminating the last break to get out 15 minutes early.

Friday

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| (1) 5:30 - 6:45 pm | Class time |
| 6:45 - 7:00 pm | Break |
| (2) 7:00 - 8:15 pm | Class time |
| 8:15 - 8:30 pm | Break |
| (3) 8:30 - 9:30 pm | Class time |

Saturday

- | | |
|----------------------|------------|
| (1) 8:00 - 9:45 am | Class time |
| 9:45 - 10:00 am | Break |
| (2) 10:00 - 11:45 am | Class time |
| 11:45 - 12:45 pm | Lunch |
| (3) 12:45 - 2:30 pm | Class time |
| 2:30 - 2:45 pm | Break |
| (4) 2:45 - 4:00 pm | Class time |
| 4:00 - 4:15 pm | Break |
| (5) 4:15 - 5:30 pm | Class time |

Because I wish active engagement by all in the discussion going on in class, I prohibit internet surfing/connection during time in class. The exceptions to this are during a class breakout session when information drawn from the internet needed, or when a question arises during class discussion that requires one of us to look up an immediate answer. I will not prohibit note taking on your laptop, but I will check if that is what you are really doing. If electronic note taking is your method, consider recent evidence in an [Atlantic magazine article](#) that handwritten notes are better absorbed into memory.

Course Purpose:

Public policy at the national, state, and local levels continues to focus attention on improving the delivery of preK-12 and college education to the populace. To further your goal of becoming transformative leaders in this arena, you therefore need some background on policy analysis and its application to the most pressing education challenges facing the Sacramento Area, California, and United States. Utilizing the basic insights of

microeconomics and political/institutional analysis, this course develops in EdD students the skills necessary for informed analysis of education policy.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of EdD 602, a student that attends all meetings will be able to:

1. Understand the difference between a “positive” and “normative” approach to education policy analysis.
2. Explain the basic tenants of microeconomics and their appropriate use in education policy analysis.
3. Apply a formal systematic approach to effectively identifying an education policy concern, offer potential alternative solutions to it, and lay out the tradeoffs of one alternative solution compared to the others.
4. Comprehend better some of major policy issues affecting preK-12 and community college education and defend positions on them using a clear theoretical framework.
5. Realize that the roots of many disagreements on education policy are the relative value that one places on “efficiency” and “equity”.
6. Communicate more effectively in writing and in person on education policy issues.
7. Propose a topic for their EdD dissertation that uses the methods taught here.

Pedagogy:

I expect that you attend all scheduled class sessions. I realize that life may intervene and thus I allow the buffer of missing an absolute maximum of one four-hour session (either a Friday or half a day Saturday). If choosing to exercise this undesirable option, you will receive a failing grade on homework due on that day and a reduction in your classroom participation grade. If you miss more than one four-hour session, you will receive a failing grade in the course.

To measure your attendance, and prepare you for participation in class discussions, I ask that you submit a typed, double-spaced, maximum two-page answer to the numbered discussion question (that corresponds to the first letter of your last name) that are on SacCT Power Point slides two weeks before they are due. There will be one of these due for a Friday night meeting (**including the first night we meet**) and one of them due for a Saturday meeting. You can only turn these in yourself and at the end of the meeting you attend. I will look them over and return them to you within a week (outside my office door or by mail if you provide self-addressed and stamped envelope) of the class meeting with a grade based upon how well you satisfy the rubric (included below) I have established for these.

Note that I am asking for a specific form of writing in answering these questions. I will post at SacCT one week before your first assignment is due, examples of this form. Feel free to contact me in advance of our first meeting if you wish to discuss what I am looking for. Note that an assignment is due the first Friday night we meet and the first Saturday.

Please look over the writing tips, at the end of this syllabus, that I have borrowed from the gateway course taught to MPPA students. They are all quite relevant to how to write for this course.

If there are concepts or ideas covered in a meeting that you did not understand, it is important to your overall success that you get these misunderstandings resolved before the next time we meet. You can do this by: (1) talking to your fellow classmates (I encourage you to form study groups or electronic study networks), (2) visiting me in my Monday or class-time office hours, (3) sending an e-mail question to me at rwassme@csus.edu, or (4) phoning me at (916) 278-6304. My promise to you is that if I am not in my office, I will respond to your Monday through Friday e-mail or phone call within 24 hours.

The *murky concept* practice I use is that each receives a page of lined paper at the start of four hours of class. **PRINT** your name and date at the top of this page, and **PRINT** out a question formulated from the reading or class discussion on a concept, idea, institution, theory, application, term, etc. that that requires greater explanation from me. Turn these sheets into me and I will record you doing this for the partial basis of your participation grade. I will the look these over before we next meet and be ready to help clarify what remains *murky* at the start of our next meeting. If I do not clear up your murkiness, be sure to ask further questions.

I encourage questions, comments, and discussion about material assigned for a meeting are during that class. I will discuss a suggestion on my pedagogy, education policy in general, the EdD Program, your career plans, and/or your planned dissertation topic in office hours, break, lunch, and/or after class. To insure a high participation grade, please stop by to visit at least once during office hours or chat with me in class breaks.

A well-prepared student for class will complete all reading and listening assignments, look over my PowerPoint notes, formulate answers to the discussion questions poised each week (you should think about all of the questions asked and not just the one assigned to you that week), and prepare to actively participate in the class discussion. I will call upon those who do not participate willingly.

Given that you are doctoral students, have done the assigned readings before coming to class, have looked over my Power Point notes that summarize the important concepts from the reading, and all desire to become working professionals that can apply the concepts covered in the readings to real world situations in California state and local education and government applications, the appropriate pedagogy for this class is not as displayed in this [“classic” movie scene](#).

I will do my best to conduct this class instead in an active-learning, discussion-based, and full-participatory format. This means I will not run through the Power Point slides one-by-one. We will instead rely upon classroom discussions of your prepared answers to the weekly questions, additional discussion questions I pose in class, and the “murky concept” questions that I receive from you at the start of every four-hour class session.

Homework Question Feedback, Revision, Reflection, and Self-Editing:

One of the goals of a doctoral program is to raise the level of written communication of those attending it. To earn the EdD, you will need to complete a doctoral dissertation that will take a higher level of writing skill than what you have already demonstrated in your master's program. Thus, I will offer a bit of assistance in this area through an additional requirement described next.

If you receive less than an "A-" (3.7) grade from me on the assignments required for every four-hour class period, I require you to rewrite it after reflecting upon the comments I have given you on it, and upon the comments you will solicit from an assigned writing partner among your peers. When you submit your revision back to me, please include with it the original marked up version and grading rubric that I completed, and the same from your assigned writing partner. When requested to view someone's writing assignment as a peer reviewer, you will have a maximum of one week to get your comments back. If it takes longer, and the person you are reviewing complains to me, you will receive a failing grade in one of your required writing assignments.

You may revise a maximum of two assignments. However, if you have two or more assignments with less than an "A-" grade from me, two need revision. The process of revision must begin the week after you receive less than an "A-" on any homework question. When you have feedback from your peer reader and me for your first revision, you must stop by my office hours or see me after class to discuss in person your planned revision. The requirement is to do this once, but you may do it for all two of your revisions if desired.

In addition to the examples posted at SacCT before we meet, on the first night of class I will offer further instruction on writing your responses to the requested questions in a form that is appropriate to the applied professional discipline of education policy and administration. Also, see the rubric and tips at the end of this syllabus. Further instruction will come as needed throughout the semester. Submit all revised assignments to me within two weeks of receiving less than an "A-" on any of them. I will accept no revisions after December 30.

Student Name Placards:

I ask that each of you create a first name placard (with material I will provide on first day of class), bring it to class each week, and place it in front of you for each class meeting. I know this will help me greatly in learning your names. I hope it will also assist you in a quicker learning of your classmates' names. I will address you by your first name and you may do the same with me.

SacCT:

This course requires that you have access to SacCT. On SacCT I will post a PowerPoint outline of material covered in each meeting and the discussion questions you are responsible for. These will be available one week before the class meets. Submit your answer to discussion question answers in paper form by the end of class. Your grades will be accessible through SacCT. SacCT also allows e-mails to fellow students and chat rooms participation. Access is at <http://www.csus.edu/sacct> .

Final Paper:

I provide details on the final paper, due December 23, at the end of this syllabus. We will devote class time to a further discussion of this.

Grades:

Where appropriate, I base grades on the following table:

<u>Percent Correct</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Number Grade</u>
100-97	A+	4.3
96-93	A	4.0
92-89	A-	3.7
88-85	B+	3.3
84-81	B	3.0
80-77	B-	2.7
76-73	C+	2.3
72-69	C	2.0
68-65	C-	1.7
64-61	D	1.0
<61	F	0.0

I assign a number grade to everything you do. Your overall course grade comes from these number grades.

I record all number grades in SacCT. If you see a recorded grade that is different from what I assigned, it is your responsibility to have me correct it by bringing back the assignment with the correct grade on it.

I base the final grade in the course on these percentages: average grade assigned on six memos (50%), class participation (20%), and final paper (30%).

I strictly follow University policy for dropping and receiving an incomplete for this course. You must complete the final paper to receive a passing grade of at least a B (3.0).

Schedule:

Meeting 1, Friday, November 17, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

- (1) Introduction
Review Syllabus
Review HW format
What are the most pressing education concerns that California faces in 2016?
- (2) *Talking Politics*
Know about Constitution and Legal System
Know about American Economic System
Know about Science
Know about Politics
- (3) *Econ of Education*
Chapter 1: Why Do Economists Study Education Policy?

Meeting 2, Saturday, November 18, 8:00 a.m. - noon

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) *Econ Education*
Chapter 2: The Structure and History of Education Markets in the U.S.
Chapter 3: Empirical Tools of Education Economics
Appendix A: Description of Data Sets Commonly Used in Econ of Educ
- (3) Measurement Matters: Perspectives on Education Policy from an Economist and School Board Member, Journal of Economic Perspectives (PDF at SacCT)
- (4) [Policy Lessons from California Public Schools that Achieve Higher than Expected](#)
Wassmer, CA Senate Office of Research
- (5) Sources of CA Education Policy Research
<http://www.lao.ca.gov>
(Legislative Analyst's Office)
<http://sor.senate.ca.gov>
(Senate Office of Research)
<http://calbudgetcenter.org>
(CA Budget and Policy Center)
<http://www.ppic.org/main/home.asp>
(Public Policy Institute of CA)
<http://www.wested.org>

(WestEd)
<http://edinsightscenter.org>
(Sac State's Education Insight Center)

Meeting 2, Saturday, November 18, 1 – 5:30 p.m.

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) *Econ Education*
Chapter 4: The Human Capital Model
Chapter 5: The Signaling Model
- (3) [Bryan Caplan on College, Signaling and Human Capital](#)
EconTalk Podcast (Written Transcripts/Comments Available)

Meeting 3, Friday, December 1, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) Practical Guide for Policy Analysis
Part I: Steps 1-8
Appendix A: Specimen of a Real-World Policy Analysis
Appendix B: Things Government Do
- (3) What to Do about Scrap Tires?: An Analysis of Options for Productive Waste Management, Wassmer (PDF at SacCT)

Meeting 4, Saturday, December 2, 8:00 am to noon

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) Econ Education
Chapter 6: Returns to Education Investment
Chapter 7: How Knowledge is Produced
- (3) Investing in Preschool Programs,
Journal of Economic Literature, (PDF at SacCT)
- (4) [Ravitch on Education](#),
EconTalk Podcast (written transcripts/comments available)
- (5) [Hanushek on Teachers](#),
EconTalk Podcast (written transcripts/comments available)

Meeting 4, Saturday, December 2, 1:00 – 5:30 p.m.

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) Econ Education

Chapter 8: The Financing of Local Public Schools
Chapter 9: Does Money Matter?

- (3) [From First to Worst](#),
YouTube Podcast, ([Transcript Here](#))
- (4) [Overview of Local Control Funding Formula and New State Accountability System](#),
LAO PowerPoint
- (5) [Get up, stand up: California's search for education equity](#),
Center for Public Integrity, (Text Below Video Acts as Transcript)
- (6) What Can Be Done to Improve Struggling High Schools?,
Journal of Economic Literature, (PDF at SacCT)

Meeting 5, Friday, December 15, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) Econ Education
Chapter 10: School Choice
Chapter 11: Test-Based Accountability Programs
- (3) School Vouchers: A Survey of the Economics Literature
Journal of Economic Literature, (PDF at SacCT)
- (4) Why Charter Schools Are Good Neighbors,
Atlantic Magazine, (PDF at SacCT)
- (5) [The Education of Michelle Rhee](#)
Frontline Video, ([Transcript Here](#))
- (6) [Comments on Michelle Rhee](#)
Dianne Ravitch's Blog

Meeting 6, Saturday, December 16, 8:00 a.m. – noon

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) Questions/Assistance on your final paper
- (3) Econ Education
Chapter 12: Teacher Labor Markets
Chapter 13: Market Dimensions of Higher Education
- (4) [Is America's Education Problem Really Just a Teacher Problem?](#)
Freakonomics Podcast, ([Transcript Here](#))

- (5) Why Colleges are Borrowing Billions,
Atlantic Magazine, (PDF Available at SacCT)
- (6) Universities as Inequality-Fighters,
Atlantic Magazine, (PDF Available at SacCT)

Meeting 6, Saturday, December 16, 1:00 – 5:30 pm

- (1) Murky Questions?
- (2) Econ Education
Chapter 14: Paying for College
Chapter 15: Economics of College Life
- (3) [Freakonomics Goes to College, Part I](#),
[Freakonomics Goes to College, Part II](#),
Freakonomics Podcast, ([Transcript 1 Here](#)), ([Transcript 2 Here](#))
- (4) Student Loans: Do College Students Borrow Too Much – Or not Enough?,
Journal of Economic Perspectives, (PDF at SacCT)
- (5) Why Men are New College Minority,
Atlantic Magazine, (PDF Available at SacCT)
- (6) [Duckworth on Grit](#),
EconTalk Podcast (written transcripts/comments available)
- (7) Final Paper Questions

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Grading Rubric for Weekly Discussion Questions

EdD 602

Fall 2017

Excellent = 10, Good = 9, Acceptable = 8, Needs Improvement = 6-7,
 Poor = 5 or <, Absent = 0

Required Content	10	9	8	7	6	0
Include your full name and reproduce the complete discussion question on a separate cover page (that does not count toward two-page limit). Document is double-spaced, no more than two typed pages long, with one-inch margins, and 11 font.						
Begins with an appropriate introductory paragraph that describes topic and layout of write-up.						
Finishes with an appropriate concluding paragraph that summarizes answer to discussion question asked.						
Paragraphs and transitions between them flow smoothly.						
Appropriate writing style and language use for a college-educated reader not familiar with the topic.						
No grammar or spelling errors.						
Answer appropriately draws upon at least one piece of outside material relevant to the discussion question, and cites this material, and all material referenced, using APA style (see style manual) on separate reference list that does not count toward two-page limit.						
Answer appropriately addresses discussion question by drawing upon assigned reading related to it (three times other value).	<u>30</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>0</u>

Total score (100 possible)

Final Assignment

EdD 602 – Fall 2017 – Professor Rob Wassmer

Due December 23, 2016 at 6 p.m.

One Grade Deduction for Every Portion of a Day Late

Submit Only a Word electronic copy in one file to rwassme@csus.edu

Overview

You are to write no more than an eight-page, typed, and double-spaced document (11 Times New Roman Font, one-inch margins all around) that represents a briefing paper to your boss (CA Governor, Senator or Assemblyperson; Superintendent, College President, Chancellor, etc.) on how to take an analytic based approach to thinking about, defining, and offering a solution to your choice of an education policy concern that has its roots and/or solutions in economics. Basically, this is something covered in the *Economics of Education* textbook.

I will use the rubric contained on the next page to score your briefing paper and assign it a grade. Pay careful attention to what this rubric is asking for and the further instructions offered below. Think about writing a paper that incorporates as much of the concepts/approaches learned in this course as possible. Thus, write something that you would not have been able to do before taking this course.

Instructions

You should structure your answer as an essay with an appropriate cover page, introductory section that describes what is in the essay, section headings that cover the requested material, and a concluding section. You will need a reference list at the end and **citations must be in APA style** ([see style manual](#)). Include tables and figures in an appendix to the essay that does not count toward your eight-page limit. I will not read beyond eight pages. (Your cover page and reference list is not part of this eight-page limit.) Other than these constraints and including the mandatory components described below, the remaining form of the write up is up to you.

Specifics That Need to Be Included

- (1) Specifically identify the official you are writing for. Be sure to write at a level of explanation and tone for someone in this position. (They are likely college educated, but do not assume any prior economic or policy analysis knowledge.)

- (2) Be clear on the purpose of this document in an introductory section and describe at the close of your introduction how you structure your write up into specific sections. Use section headings throughout paper. End with a section that features your specific conclusions.
- (3) Place in **bold** in your introduction a one-sentence **problem statement** in the form suggested by Bardach. Also, include additional paragraphs that describe the magnitude of the policy problem you have chosen, the magnitude of change required for a solution, and why the problem warrants public intervention.
- (4) The section after the introduction should be at least one page long and describe in appropriate detail the public policy problem within the context of the economics and policy framework learned in this class. Carefully look over your notes and describe the economic and policy concepts learned that will help your client better understand both why the government should get involved with this problem and the alternatives you are proposing. Consider this a section that you could not have possibly written before taking this class – so demonstrate to me what you have learned. Also, include a figure to stimulate interest in your topic.
- (5) Choose two **alternatives** that could solve the policy problem and have some form of economic basis (discussed in this class). Describe each of these alternatives in more detail in a half-page or more. Appendix B in Bardach, can help in your constructing of these alternatives.
- (6) Choose and describe three different **criteria** to evaluate the desirability of the three alternatives put forward. Describe each criterion in a half-page or more. Should different weights apply to criteria when deciding best alternative?
- (7) The body of your paper should utilize at least five references that allow you to better evaluate the alternatives you are proposing. Only three of these can be from the material covered in class. Organize your literature review in the themes of the criteria you have chosen to evaluate the alternatives proposed.
- (8) Conclude with your recommendation on what alternative to pursue to tackle the policy problem. Be sure to detail your justification for choosing this alternative.
- (9) Turn on the grammar check in Microsoft Word (or use another one) and be sure to correct all issues. I will do the same when grading and grade you down for common grammar/spelling problems flagged out. **Pay attention to eliminating the presence of passive voice.**

Grading Rubric for Final Exam, EdD 602, Fall 2016

Scale out of 10 points: Excellent = 10, Good = 9, Acceptable = 8, Needs Improvement = 6-7, Poor = 5 or <, Absent = 0

<i>Required Content</i>	10	9	8	7	6	0
Development and organization (20 points): appropriate introduction and conclusion, organization of paper clearly described in introduction and done as stated						
Writing mechanics (30 points): grammar, word choice, and sentence structure						
Presentation (10 points): appropriate and attractive format; Explanatory figure included						
Citations (10 points): accurate citations and listing of references using APA style						
Public policy problem statement (10 points)						
Layperson's description of use of Bardach analysis (10 points)						
Very specific justification of need for public intervention into this problem based upon what learned in class (20 points)						
Justification of choice of alternatives to solve policy problem (20 points)						
Justification of choice of criteria to evaluate alternatives (20 points)						
Choice of literature too evaluate alternatives desirability based upon criteria and write up (30 points)						
Policy recommendation given and justification (20 points)						

**Total Score
(200 Possible)**

Writing an Analytical Paper for the PPA {EdD} Program

The following material borrowed (with slight editing) from Professor Venezia's PPA 200 Syllabus. Available at <http://www.csus.edu/ppa/syllabi/fall2017/ppa20001.pdf> .

The easier parts:

Use proper grammar, capitalization, punctuation, source citation, italics, etc.

Never use contractions (e.g., “we’ve” for “we have”) in papers for this program or in professional writing.

Make sure you know the difference between a semi-colon and a colon and that you use them appropriately.

Always read through your papers once for content and once for grammar before you turn them in. Turn on Editor function in Word and make sure detection is set for passive voice. If Word is indicating that there is a grammar/space problem (when the red and green lines appear), pay attention and fix the problem. If you opt not to do so, have a good reason.

Do not mix singular and plural in one sentence. For example, do not write, “The student should complete the paper so that they can receive a grade.” “The student” is singular and “they” is plural. This happens frequently when a writer is trying to avoid using she/he throughout a paper, so watch for it diligently! Just use he or she.

Avoid passive voice whenever possible (“The table will be set.” “The paper will be graded.”). Sometimes people think that using passive voice sounds more formal and academic, but it really makes writing convoluted, and it takes responsibility away regarding the action discussed in the sentence. (If you can add “by zombies” at the end of your sentence, that is an indication that it is in passive voice.)

On a related note, PPA faculty members believe it is acceptable to write in the first person, at least to a limited extent (this means using the pronoun “I”). This is especially the case when you want to clarify your own claims and distinguish them from those of others. Thus, it is perfectly acceptable to use something like the following in a paper, “While some scholars have argued that urban sprawl leads to X and Y, I will argue that it results in Z.” Using the first-person pronoun often makes it easier to write in the active voice.

You can read more about passive voice online. See, for example:

http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2015/04/01/scientists_should_stop_writing_in_the_passive_voice.html.

Do not write that “someone feels” something when what you really mean is that someone “thinks” or “believes” something to be the case (“Students feel that there is too much homework.”). Here’s a NY Times Op Ed about this issue (“Stop Saying I Feel Like”): http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/01/opinion/sunday/stop-saying-i-feel-like.html?_r=0.

Good paragraphs have the following components: A topic sentence, usually at the beginning; Supporting evidence; and a transition to the next idea (but not an overly-simple transition, such as, “Now I am going to write about X.”).

Do not use the royal “we” if you are the sole author (“We will next discuss…”).

Answer the question asked. If it has multiple parts that are not rhetorical, answer all of them.

Tell the readers what you are going to say. It is much easier to read analytical work if you know where the author is going, and it is common to offer such direction in the very first paragraph. We will not be looking for you to write a mystery novel.

Note that writing for public policy and administration is much different than other types of writing in this regard. If you were in a fictional writing program we (faculty members *and* fiction readers) might cringe if you gave away too much of the story on the first page. You are not in such a program. Rather, you are in a program that assumes the audience has much to do, limited amounts of time, and needs to understand the argument at hand quickly and accurately. So, get to the point.

Start at the beginning of the thought, not in the middle. (How much can you reasonably assume the reader knows? Who is audience and what is the purpose?)

Make statements that you can support with evidence as opposed to beliefs. Cite your evidence. Pick a method for citing references and use it consistently.

Every sentence should make or support a point—hopefully one that is connected to your overall argument.

Avoid long explanations of details that are irrelevant. This is probably not the time to dazzle someone with your specialized knowledge of a particular project.

Watch your choice of words. Both incorrect and unintended meanings can get you in trouble. Clarity is much more important than demonstrating such knowledge.

The harder parts:

Create a coherent framework for your papers—a line of thought and a structure that defines and answers the questions posed. **Use headings and subheadings.** This helps you make sure that your writing is logical and is flowing well and it creates a roadmap for the reader.

Use relevant literature (hopefully multiple authors) to ground your work.

Be analytical, not editorial or colloquial (unless your explicit task is to write editorial or present ideas in a colloquial manner). This means that you will have to analyze and synthesize information, using a critical lens.

Take the time to edit your papers to make the writing crisp, the flow coherent and logical, and the document shorter and clearer. I suggest re-reading your papers at least two times before submitting them. I know that this is challenging given everyone's responsibilities in life, but you cannot do high quality work at school or work without multiple reviews. I also suggest peer editing whenever possible.

Make it easy on the reader by using consistent language. In other kinds of writing, it might be more interesting to change it up a bit by substituting a synonym here and there in the attempt to avoid using the same word repeatedly. But doing so in analytical writing may lead the reader to think that you are introducing a new concept. For example, if you are discussing "underrepresented" populations, use that term consistently (presumably having defined it) rather than switching to "underserved," for example, so that the reader will not wonder if you are introducing a somewhat different category.

Make sure you use solid evidence, and that you know the difference between using evidence and advocating for an issue.

Tips:

Think about the question(s) asked for a few days.

Make an outline. Think about your headings and subheadings.

Write a draft. Edit it for content. Let it sit for a day (or at least a few hours). Do your headings and subheadings work now that you've written the paper? If not, move things around and do major editing. Read it again. Are you happy with it?

Once you are happy with the substance of your paper, read it again for grammar. Have someone proofread it.

Do a logic check (This is a topic sentence and it is supported by the following evidence...This is the analytical tool I am using because...).

SQ4R

Reading for Comprehension for Graduate Students

The design of SQ4R technique helps you read for comprehension and understanding. The goal is not to read faster; it is to read more effectively the first time and retain the important concepts. You do not have to use this if you do not want to. SQ4R stands for:

Scan:

The first task is to scan the material you are about to read to determine the point of the piece. Review the title, the table of contents, the book jackets, the preface, introduction and conclusion if appropriate. Well-written books and articles *tell you what they are going to tell you*. As you scan, look for context, topic, main ideas, the author's(') perspective or bias, main arguments made, etc. Think about: how does this fit with other material you have read about this topic?

Questions:

What question(s) is this author trying to tell you? What question(s) is the author trying to answer? After reading the piece, what should you know or understand better?

Many books and most articles at the graduate level have a perspective. Textbooks, of course, are a bit different, since much of what is conveyed is information rather than a perspective or viewpoint. Some texts will contrast several theories. Articles and most books, however, are trying to address a question or theory, or convey an idea.

Write down any questions you have identified before you begin to read and then look for the answers to your questions.

The 4 R's:

Read: Once you have your questions identified, begin to do the reading. First, glance at the material. Is it organized into subsections that are logical? If it is, then it may make sense to scan them for content. Much of the reading assigned at this level has a main point and the author tells you what it is in an introduction or overview chapter. Skim the areas that make sense at first glance and read more in depth in the areas you did not understand as well. Look at graphs, charts and tables as sources of summary information as well.

Remember what your questions are. Read sections of material at a time, not the whole thing from beginning to end (unless it is short). As soon as you find yourself straying mentally, stop reading! Stretch, get up—do whatever you need to to get your focus back. Review where you left off to make sure you did not start to stray much earlier!

The zebra stripe problem... "Highlighting" can confuse you more than help you. Wait until you have completed the reading and answered any questions you made before you highlight. At that point, you will know what the important points are and you can annotate them with your own thoughts. Otherwise, you wind up with the dreaded zebra stripe... lots of yellow and white stripes with no real meaning.

Reflect: Think about what you just read. Can you answer your questions? A friend asks what you are reading. Can you say, "This chapter is about the way people behave in organizations; right now I am reading about how we motivate people," or would you need to say something very general (such as "I am reading about public affairs")?

Recite:

Saying things out loud can help you retain information. Tell someone the summary of what you just read, or say it to yourself out loud. Think of examples that help illustrate this point. Ideally, join a study group and share your questions and answers (after all of the people in the group have done their initial reading).

Review:

Review what you have written down. Is it in your own words? Does it make sense to you? Can you make sense of it three days later? What about three weeks later? Notes that do not mean anything to you, either from class or from readings, are not worth the time it took to write them down. If your notes do not make sense now, they never will. One hint about notes is to use your own words 99% of the time. Putting information into your own words can help you figure out if you understand the main point(s).

Sources:

Petrie, Trent A., Lisa Pinkenburg Landry, and Kimberly Bobinski Edwards. (1999). Achieving Academic Success, Ron Jon Publishing. Lecture notes from Dr. Ross Clayton and Dr. John Kirlin, University of Southern California (via Mary Kirlin).